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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 2007

In Today's Papers

Turkey Warns US Not to Repeat Airspace Violation
All papers report Turkey asked the US formally on Tuesday to avoid another violation of its airspace after two US F-16 jetfighters briefly infringed on Turkish airspace near the Iraqi border last week. Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) gave a note to a US Ankara Embassy official, requesting that this kind of incident not be repeated. State Department spokesman Tom Casey told the press the planes had inadvertently violated Turkish airspace for "a couple of minutes, adding "'We are very respectful of Turkish sovereignty and of Turkish airspace. We are going to make sure we thoroughly look into this and make sure that there are no further incidents of this kind.' Prime Minister Erdogan said in a televised interview that "We warned them not to repeat this. If this happens again, what we will do is obvious," papers report.

AKP Displays 'Centrist' Image
Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports that on Tuesday some prominent politicians joined the AKP, the party of Prime Minister Erdogan. Among those formally introduced at a party meeting by the PM were the former secretary general of opposition CHP Ertugrul Gunay, former education minister Mehmet Saglam, former CHP member Haluk Ozdalga, Merrill-Lynch economist Mehmet Simsek, lawyer Aysenur Bahcekapili, Alevi writer Reha Camuroglu, and the wife of famous cartoonist Salih Memecan, Nursuna Memecan. Erdogan said AKP is Turkey's "centrist" party, stressing they will protect the nation's basic values and diversity as well as its cultural legacy.

US-Made Missiles Found on Train

Hurriyet and Milliyet report 300 US-made missiles were found in a train traveling from Iran to Syria after the train was attacked by PKK terrorists in the southeastern province of Bingol. Eight cars of the freight train were derailed when PKK terrorists detonated a bomb planted on the tracks.

US Transfers Security to Kurds in Northern Iraq

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report the Kurdish regional administration in will take charge of security for the provinces of Erbil, Dohuk and Suleymaniye in northern Iraq Wednesday in a transfer of command from the US-led coalition. A US coalition forces statement said the Kurdistan regional government was deemed ready to assume security responsibility in the region. Islamist-oriented Zaman reports the decision to transfer security responsibility to Iraqi Kurds was made during a meeting held in Baghdad between Kurdish regional president Massoud Barzani, Iraq's Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and US military leaders.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Intervention into North Iraq
Hadi Uluengin comments in the mainstream daily Hurriyet: "Turkey should confess that the main reason for the much-wanted intervention into Iraq is not really to stop PKK terrorism but because of concern over the possible establishment of an independent Kurdish state and the influence of this state on the Kurds in Turkey. First of all, from the angle of international law, the Turkish military has no right to enter Northern Iraq, because Iraq has been an independent country since 1932. The US violated international law by invading Iraq, but, alas, it is the only super power. Moreover, the Turkey-Iraq border was determined in 1926 by the Ankara agreement and there is no Iraqi Kurdistan demanding more land than that determined by this agreement. Therefore, any possible operation against Iraq will have no legal justification. Some might describe this as 'hot pursuit,' however, crossing the border, building a military headquarters there and engaging in armed clashes is not counted hot pursuit. People should consider international law before encouraging a cross-border operation against Iraq."

Ismet Berkan writes in the liberal Radikal: "Following the violation of Turkish territory by US F-16s, the issue of a

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cross-border operation against Iraq rose to the top of the agenda again. This issue has three angles: domestic politics, countering terrorism and foreign politics. From the angle of domestic politics the plan is very simple: those calling for an operation are accusing the government of being afraid of the US and trying to weaken its power. In order to fight against terrorism the solution is to stop PKK activities in the autonomous Kurdish region in Northern Iraq. As for the third angle, the foreign policy front, Iraq is under US invasion and the US is responsible for Iraq's territorial integrity.

Some time ago, after Turkish demands, the US urged Kurdish leaders to stop PKK infiltration into Turkey. The violation of Turkish territory by American F-16s might be a new issue but maybe the purpose was to stop the PKK activities at the border. Nevertheless, there are certain facts that no one can deny: the autonomous Kurdish Administration in Northern Iraq is not behaving like a good neighbor to Turkey and continues to shelter and protect the terrorist organization which claimed many civilian and military lives in Turkey. It is not possible to remain silent for long to such a situation."

Sarkozy to Tone Down on Turkey until December's EU Summit
Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet and Zaman report, citing the French daily Le Figaro, that President Nicolas Sarkozy has decided not to take any anti-Turkish steps until the EU summit six-months from now. Sarkozy is also careful about moves that could have an impact on general elections in Turkey. Sarkozy will not veto the opening of EU discussions with Turkey in three new chapters at the EU summit on June 21-22, but will raise the issue of fixing EU borders at the EU summit in December. Following a phone conversation with Prime Minister Erdogan last week, Sarkozy sent his top diplomatic advisor Jean-David Levitte to Ankara. During talks with Levitte, Turks said Sarkozy's proposal for forming a Mediterranean Union as alternate to Turkey's EU membership would not be accepted. Erdogan mentioned some half a million Turks living in France, and the French investments in Turkey, stressing ties with France will be strengthened further, say papers.

TV Highlights
NTV (6 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal said the ruling AKP attempts to change the constitution are "wrong and unhealthy."
- Seven PKK terrorists have been killed in clashes with the security forces in the southeastern province of Sirnak.
- The parliament has agreed to extend the mission of Turkish troops in UNIFIL in Lebanon by one year.
- Marginal left-wing Turkish parties have agreed to cooperate in the upcoming parliamentary elections to form a joint platform for supporting independent candidates.

International News

- President Bush imposed economic sanctions against Sudan in a bid to curb the violence in Darfur.
- Tehran, accusing Washington of using intellectuals and others inside the country to undermine the Islamic state, has charged three Iranian-Americans with spying.
- The White House is expected to announce President Bush's nomination of Robert Zoellick to replace Paul Wolfowitz as World Bank president.
- Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev has reversed a controversial ban on mosques using loudspeakers for the Muslim call to prayer.

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